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and social exchange. Each of the two sections is supposed to be characterized by certain attributes; the Musiab being renowned for their boasting and self-pride, and heavy-built members, while the 'Onab are reputed to be comparatively stingy and much inclined to gossip.

There are no formal heads of clans but there are natural leaders who are spontaneously appointed on occasions from the oldest members. The distinctive hallmark of every clan is its guest house, where the adult members of the clan have their communal meals during the fasting month of Ramadan, receive a common guest, settle disputes, meet for ordinary gossip and can celebrate their feasts, ceremonies and funerals. On one hand, the clans are aware of their integral identity; and on the other hand, they are aware that they are linked together by a common ancestor forming the unity of the village.

Silwa Kibli (Southern Silwa) and its neighbouring villages are inhabited by the descendants of 'Ayyash the third brother of 'On and Musa. This genealogical relationship is the explanation given to the similarities in customs and traditions between the two parts of Silwa Kibli and Silwa Bahari.

The genealogical pattern goes on to repeat itself still further to include and explain the relations and similarities in the larger socio-geographic region extending throughout the whole province. Apart from the towns 'where people are mixed', most of the villages of this region are inhabited by either the G'afra or 'Ababda. While the G'afra are the descendants of G'afar al-Sadik whose great-grandfather was the grandson of the Prophet, the 'Ababda are the descendants of 'Abdullah ibn al-Zubair who belonged to the Kuraish clan, the Prophet's clan, but was not so close in kinship or favour to the Prophet. The G'afra consider themselves more hospitable than the 'Ababda; and they are also distinguishable as farmers, while the 'Ababda, even if they are farmers at present, were originally camel-drivers.

Moreover the G'afra region is divided into two parts: those villages lying along the eastern bank of the Nile are descendants of Bahr (amongst whose sons were 'On, Musa and 'Ayyash), while those stretching along the western bank of the Nile are the descendants of Buhair, the brother of Bahr. The diagram overleaf represents the ramification of kinship in the region of G'afra and Silwa.

It is clear from this that not only the village, but the whole region represents a ramified genealogical tree, having one main trunk. It is also significant that this ramification is related to the branching off of brothers who were not in agreement, e.g. in the division of East and West in the whole region, in the division of the two parts of Silwa (South and North) and in the division of Silwa itself into two sections. This could be taken as a recognition of a deep-seated cultural expectation of brothers' discord, in spite of the highly idealized expectation of fraternal solidarity.

The genealogical pattern, based on the unilateral descent, repeats itself

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834 tions, and an old woman can pass by a group of men without covering her face, and can salute them, or talk to them on passing, but even then she cannot sit with men outside the house.

INTER-FAMILY RELATIONS

593 It is appropriate here to discuss the stylized norms of relationship and behaviour that should obtain between the various members of the family as an index to the understanding of the social structure and its functioning.

The husband-wife pattern is one where the husband is the superior partner and enjoys the highest position in the family. He is, as the saying goes, 'the supporting pillar and the vantage of the house', who is expected to make all the important decisions. The wife should tell her husband of the major events in the household, though he should not by convention betray any eagerness in enquiring about them. The husband is socially responsible for the acts and undertakings of his wife, immediately she moves from her matrilocal residence. He usually plans the work of his sons, while the wife does the same with the daughters; but he is not expected to interfere with his wife's domestic work. On the other hand, the wife is supposed to be submissive, devoted, and respectful to her husband. Sexual fidelity is the hallmark of sustained marriage relationship, as infidelity entails at least divorce, if not attempting to kill the wife and the paramour. As a wife, she should also attend to her husband, offering the best food to him rather than to the children or herself; the reason being that she can always have children but she cannot afford to have a substitute for her supporter (sanad). She should open the door for her husband when he knocks, pour out the water when he washes his hands after the meal, and give him priority in every respect.

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Although the wife seems subordinate in this pattern of relationship, she is almost the absolute manager of the house. She is the treasurer of the crops, money, legal documents, and the holder of the keys to the various chests in the house. If the man is expected to be generous and showy, the wife is expected to be frugal and industrious. The saying is that 'the man is like an overflowing sea, while the woman is like a dyke, checking his undue extravagance'. It is also conceded that the building up of a man is due to his wife, but so is his downfall, which would be regarded as the result of his wife's domestic policy.

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In spite of the fact that married women do not work in the field in Silwa and in most parts of Aswan Province, the wife certainly monopolizes certain economic pursuits which are considered to be purely her domain. She raises chickens, geese, ducks, goats and sheep, and men recognize this as a purely female occupation. This is in contrast to the raising of cows, camels and donkeys by men. My informant, Mahmoud, told me: 'Women look after the "small change" while men look after the pounds.' The wife raises poultry and tends to small change as these are directly concerned

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with food consumption. There is no wife in the village who does not pursue this type of activity, as it is great disgrace not to be able to let blood flow even from a chicken if a guest comes to visit her husband, or at least provide her husband or children with a 'meat dish' on festival occasions. She should also raise goats and sheep, so that in case of death in the house an 'agira'—slain animal—can be always available at the funeral.

Between husband and wife no levity of behaviour is permissible, and no obvious physical intimacy of any sort in public or in front of the children. In fact, the husband's contacts with the house are very few. It is quite common to find a child who has been asked by his mother to call father from a meeting outside saying, 'O father, they say come and speak'. This is usually a call indicating that food is ready but neither the word food nor the word mother are ever supposed to be uttered in public. The father normally quits the house immediately he finishes his meal.

During the first year of marriage the wife does not eat with her husband, partly because he is in the matrilocal residence, and partly because the wife has not yet become the mother of the children. Only then can she eat with him, but she should never confess that she has eaten before he has, for her eating afterwards is the proper procedure.

From the standpoint of sentiment, the in-law relationship is a strong and binding force, involving exchange of gifts, food and visits similar in many ways to the kinship (lineage) obligations. It is said that the wife's mother is normally very affectionate, and always fussing over her son-in-law, especially when he is in his matrilocal residence, and this attitude is usually a source of complaint and jealousy on the part of the brothers and sisters of the bride. Yet the husband's mother is traditionally harsh, difficult and fault-finding. My informant, Ali, explains the difference of the sentiment of the two mothers-in-law by saying: 'The wife's mother is all too glad to procure a husband for her daughter, and she is grateful to him for marrying her daughter; thus she favours him. The husband's mother is resentful of the fact that her son's attachment, which was solely hers before marriage, is shared with his wife.'

It is also significant that the wife never refers to, or addresses her husband by his first name, especially in public. She either refers to him as 'Son of so and so' (his father), or 'my man', or less commonly 'my husband'. She addresses him by saying 'O man'; and the same applies to her husband who refers to his wife as 'my woman' or 'people of the house' and addresses her by saying 'O girl'.[1]

[1] Concerning the absence of any demonstration of tender feeling between wife and husband, Westermarck writes, 'It is considered indecent of a man to show any affection for his wife, and it would consequently be improper to speak of it in proverbs'. He further maintains that such an absence does not mean that no such feeling exists but has to be understood in relation to the Moorish ideas of decency. *Wit and Wisdom in Morocco*, London, 1930, p. 52.

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THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY

593 On the whole, the structural attitude of husband to wife is one of possession and protection. While the husband assumes the major role in all the activities outside the house, the woman rules almost supreme in matters connected with the household organization.

The second pattern of relationship is that between father and children. With his children, as with his wife, the father avoids excessive intimacy in order to be respected and obeyed. By keeping social distance, he can be regarded as the most powerful agent in administering the moral and social code of conduct. Through his curt and abrupt admonitions he controls both his sons and daughters. In practice he has more to do with his sons, while the mother has more to do with her daughters, but of course there is a great degree of overlapping. There are no serious clashes between parents as to their respective rights of rearing the children. The mother always tries to keep her children quiet while their father is in the house.

[611] The absolute authority of the father over children is due to the fact that they belong to him and his family of orientation. Yet it is also recognized that only the mother and the mother's people can provide the immature children with affection and tenderness. According to Moslem law, immature children, in case of divorce, can be kept with the mother till the age of seven for a boy, and the age of nine for a girl, while the father sends the expenses of upbringing to the mother. If the mother dies the care and upbringing of children is usually entrusted to their maternal aunt or maternal grandmother.

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The authority of the parents is sanctioned by the Koran. Obedience of children to their parents comes next to the Moslem's major obligations to God and the Prophet. Disobedience to parents ('okouk al walidain) is one of the major sins which is harshly punished in the next world, and, according to Ali, even in this world. A disobedient son or daughter will never live a successful or happy life on earth, and the parents' curse might even affect the son's or daughter's children. To obtain the parental blessing, he continued, is more important than to inherit land or wealth from them, as having their blessing is a prerequisite for both piety and success. Thus, if the father is to wield authority and provide protection, the son or daughter must show 'filial piety' and submission to him as well as to the mother.

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One can cite many avoidances that a son must observe in connection with his father, especially in public. A mature son is not expected to sit beside his father in the same gathering; and if his presence is required he should play a very subordinate role, usually evidenced by the fact that he speaks as little as possible, and withdraws at the earliest possible opportunity. If it happens that the father is sitting on a bench at a funeral, for example, the son should sit on the ground; and if he has to sit on a bench, he should not sit on the same bench as his father, or on one opposite to him in order to avoid the face to face position. If the son is lying on the ground, he should sit upon seeing his father passing by; and he should never

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be sitting while his father is standing. Of course, he cannot smoke in his father's presence, or do anything that might imply that he is not giving full attention to his father.

Amongst the children, the eldest son is favoured by his parents as he is the first to relieve his father of some of his tasks. The importance of age and sex in parents' treatment of their children shows itself, for instance, in the distribution of meat. Boys, on the whole, receive more than girls, and the older gets more than the younger. To vary this order is regarded as one of the means of reward or punishment for the children. An elder son is not expected to argue 'face to face' with his father if the latter refuses any of the former's demands. In this case he has to send a messenger to negotiate with his father. Complete identification with the father is reflected in the saying, 'Your father's enemy is your enemy and your father's friend is your friend', which is also a further evidence of the importance of family and clan solidarity. The observance of the proper rules of conduct with parents as well as with other relatives is the tangible attribute of children described as 'muaddabeen' meaning disciplined (often wrongly translated literally as 'polite'). In his role, the father has to combine discipline backed by moral sanctions.[1]

The relations of children to the mother are certainly warmer, intimate and more affectionate. The mother's tenderness and affection for her children should be repaid in obedience, service and respect. Ali told me that a mother's prayers for her children are the most effective appeal to God. Respect and regard for her is enjoined upon her sons and daughters by the Koran and the Prophetic tradition that says 'Paradise is at the feet of mothers'.

The relationship between brothers is expected to be one of complete solidarity. The common saying goes: 'Support your brother whether he is the oppressor or the oppressed.' If a mother sees her sons squabbling over anything, she admonishes, asking them to deal with each other 'like brothers'. The admonition is also exercised when a boy stranger comes to visit the family, and the boys are asked to go out and play 'like brothers'. However, the first-born has a prominent position among his brothers and sisters. He acts as his father's representative. He gives orders to the younger brothers and sisters, and at least threatens them with punishment, sometimes telling his father. Other members of the family acknowledge and even support the prerogative of the first-born son. But, on the whole, brothers are expected to form a united front and act as 'two heads under one cap'. Older married brothers are usually held to be responsible for the care of their younger brothers and sisters after the death of the father.

Yet, in spite of the fact that brothers are expected to stand by each other through thick and thin, they are not encouraged to walk, sit or play together, especially after the age of eleven or twelve. If two or three brothers

[1] M. Fortes, 'Parenthood in Primitive Society' (summary of a lecture given in *Man*, Vol. LI, May 1951).

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593 have to go to the fields they should not accompany each other, but should follow one after the other to avoid the effects of the evil eye. It is not considered 'polite' for married brothers to sit together at one meeting. Moreover, there is no joking relationship or greeting terms between brothers.

The relationship between sisters is mainly based on affection and mutual co-operation, but not necessarily that of solidarity as they are destined to live in separate homes after marriage. The same pattern of relationship obtains between brothers and sisters although married brothers are socially responsible for their unmarried sisters. In the case of the sister's divorce, her brother is the guardian in the absence of the father. More often than not, a widowed woman who has no sons, goes to live with her brother, and hands over to him her property that she inherited from their father.

595 The relation between consanguine brothers and sisters is supposed to be bristling with friction and jealousy. Though they are from the same father and carry his name, their mothers are called 'darra'-rivals; and hence they identify themselves with their mothers from the emotional point of view. Solidarity between consanguine brothers is not structurally expected as they are not nursed from the same breast. Uterine brothers are expected to be more affable and less quarrelsome with each other. This difference is partly intelligible when it is known that consanguine brothers inherit land and property from their father, while uterine brothers are 'screened' and do not inherit anything from the stepfather. However, whether between half-brothers or full brothers, the expectation of friction between siblings is widely held, and does actually occur, and is usually explained as an expression of their jealousy and rivalry. Apart from the motive of sibling rivalry to which reference will be made later, this friction between siblings could also be attributed to the absolute authority of the father. Jealousy of, and rivalry for the father's power, is suppressed and made acceptable by the possibility of gaining rewards of good behaviour both on social and religious grounds. Hence the father-son conflict is displaced to the brothers and sisters, who are in open rivalry for the father's favour and his sanctions and rewards. Moreover the methods of their early training, as will be discussed later, do not contribute to the suppression of rivalry; on the contrary, they stimulate and emphasize the value of rivalry in social behaviour.[1]

604 The relation between a boy and a girl and his or her paternal or maternal uncle reflects almost the same relationship pattern that obtains between children and their father and mother. The paternal uncle and aunt are expected to support the father in enforcing discipline and social sanctions. It is even said that the main responsibility in this respect lies on the uncle's shoulders, as the father might be inclined to be less firm, having particular love for his children. On the other hand, the maternal uncle and aunt are also the source of affection and pampering. Grown-ups can sit

[1] This explanation is based on a similar situation in the Tanala culture of Madagascar. Cf. Abram Kardiner, *The Individual and his Society*, pp. 315–16.

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endless friction, disputes, and uneasy relations occur. Brother is pitted against brother, father against son, mother against daughter, and so on between the various other categories of relatives. In fact, some of the popular sayings indicate that the relation between kin is pregnant with friction and discord. It is said that 'relatives are like scorpions', 'the relative's pot never reaches the boiling point' and 'who brings disasters but relatives?'. It is also indicative of the uneasy side of connections between relatives to hear that it is from the relatives more than others that one should guard against the effects of the evil eye.

The 'in-law' relationship also plays an important part in the harmony or discord that pervades a family atmosphere. Whether brothers live together as one economic unit, or whether a father 'repulses' his married son, depends to a great extent on the congeniality of the brother's wives, or the son's wife and her people. In this particular context, the conflict is usually one between the structurally sanctioned behaviour between the brothers and the new situation created by marriage and children to two different women. Thus ideally brothers should marry sisters to minimize disputes over the children or domestic affairs, and this is probably one of the reasons for the preferential marriage of cousins. In the case of a married son, the parents have priority over the wife and her people, as descent is the structural keynote to behaviour in this situation.

Indeed a great deal of friction and uneasiness in relationship is due to the fact that the individual in some situations is unable to strike a balance between the structural behaviour on one hand, and the exigencies of life and personal feelings on the other hand. A great deal of the diffused and overt aggression that is prevalent in this community is partly due to the 'bottling up' of personal and spontaneous feeling, or at least to the very limited scope for its outlet or for its direct expression in action.

A few examples of disputes, illustrating this point can be given. Two brothers were married to two sisters, and were living in one compound working together, and forming an economic unit. The wife of the younger brother died, and he remarried a girl who was unrelated to the brother's wife. Immediately intrigues and friction arose, and the two brothers had to separate. The friction cropped up again when the older brother got his daughter married to a cousin of theirs, while his brother had a boy who was considered socially more eligible because he was the girl's cousin through both father and mother. This event brought the brothers to non-speaking terms and 'Arabs' tried twice to reconcile them, but met with no success.

Another intererting case was of a father suing his son before the court and trying to denounce him as his son. The cause was the rage of the father alleging that his son had made himself a nuisance in the village by his gossip, his writing of complaints against people to the official authorities in the central government, and on top of that, he had married without the father's approval.

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578 593 Another dispute between two brothers was where the younger accused the older of being a spendthrift, and in his extravagance, mainly due to his wife, he 'spoilt' the reputation of the family by borrowing from other people though he earned more than his younger brother. In spite of the often repeated admonition of the younger, the older brother persisted in his ways. The misunderstanding became acute when both agreed to build a new house, the younger undertaking the expenses of the building, to be paid by his brother for his share, which he had not done. The dispute flared up again when the older brother got his daughter married without consulting the younger brother.

578 622 595 Another dispute which has been dragging on for a considerable time is that over the office of 'Omda'. For the last fifty years the office had been in one family. The death of the previous Omda started the strife between his sons from different mothers. He had six children from one wife and five from another. During his lifetime, the two houses united in service and respect for the father in spite of the seamy side of relationship. Immediately he died ten years ago, the suppressed rivalries and jealousies flared up. The sons disagreed as to who was to be elected for the office. An Arab council met and decided to put up the second son from the first wife (as the first son was illiterate).[1] The other house had to submit to the decisions of the council; yet the rivalry never died down, and the brothers from the other house still waited their chance. After devious intrigues, the Omda was suspended for corrupt conduct related to the system of rationing. After the lengthy court procedures which took almost a whole year, he was found not guilty. The time for filling the vacant post of Omda came, and the deposed Omda as well as the eldest brother of the other house entered their names officially as candidates. It is interesting to note that the three surviving uncles of the two candidates were with the new one. [604] One of the main reasons for their not supporting the deposed Omda was that he did not treat them as paternal uncles as they expected him to do. Moreover, on certain occasions he insisted that they should stand for him, as they used to do for his father—an attitude they resented. On the election day both the candidates went to the 'Mudeeriah' in Aswan, followed by dozens of their supporters. The new candidate gained the office this time; thereupon, the other house started their intrigues to depose him.

578 593 A mother quarrelled with her son because he did not give her as much attention and economic support as he did his wife. The son had to leave the village and took a domestic job in Cairo. The mother sued her son in the court because he did not support her in old age while he was earning money. Indeed a great deal of discord occurs as a result of the [604] conflicts between the loyalties and obligations towards 'the family of orientation' and 'the conjugal family' and the in-law relatives. It is often said that the newly married person has two minds, to denote the

[1] After the death of an Omda his sons are usually considered for succession; in fact, the Omda's sons, even during his lifetime, are addressed as Omdas.

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893 [626] ing her husband's finances, especially in her demand for food rarities, as 'a woman permanently in the craving period'. The pregnant woman's desires also provide a testing ground for neighbourliness and reciprocity when she sends one of her family to 'borrow' something for her. Neighbours are expected to meet such requirements if they have been approached, while at the same time they are usually requested not to spread the news. This could also be regarded as an occasion to announce the expected baby to the neighbours, who might be asked to help at a later stage.

● [593] In the 'craving period' the wife asserts her desires over her husband, and with it goes an assertion of the matrilineal side over the patrilineal authority. The gifts and attention centred around the pregnant woman by the husband and his people indicate some cultural balance and provide a psychological outlet to the normal husband-wife pattern of relationship. The ideology of a patriarchal community has to concede a certain amount of tolerance for the satisfaction of its fervent sentiment towards the offspring.

Apart from the whims that should be satisfied, the craving woman is warned against showing fear or expressing ridicule or criticism for anybody, as the embryo might be moulded in the image of the person feared, ridiculed or criticized. On the other hand, she is encouraged to show appreciation for children. On seeing a child in its mother's arms, the craving woman expresses her admiration for it, whereupon the suckling mother would wish her to have one like it or better.

By the middle of the fifth lunar month, when the woman's abdomen usually becomes large, it is taken to mean that the child is well developed, and that the mother can resume her normal work. Relatives and neighbours can come and visit her, wishing her to bear a boy, or whatever God wills! Up to the ninth month, nothing more significant happens except the preparation of the proper food for the forthcoming event. Food [431] presents, especially from the patrilineal side, are sent to the home, e.g. molasses, clarified butter and sugar. The women members may invite a [789] fortune-teller to give them some tidings, and dreams might be told also in connection with the expected baby.

842 The extent of the desire of women for children can be gauged by the multifarious devices to which they resort to induce pregnancy. A woman who does not bear children is called 'akir'—one who literally 'kills' her offspring; and the woman who has stopped bearing is referred to as 'mushahira'—being 'bound' or literally affected (in some way) by the moon. The following methods are used as aids to pregnancy in both cases:

Crossing the Nile in a boat is one of the ways of 'freeing the chaining' of a woman. It symbolizes the fact that she is moving from one state to another. She might visit a faraway saint, taking some food with her and [788] filling her dish with some of the sand from the saint's grave to sprinkle over her body on her return.

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858 842 [783] pride in the number of my followers in comparison with those of other nations". If sons and daughters behave uprightly they will act as a means of redeeming the parents' sin. Any good action by the child, e.g. giving alms, helping the weak, digging a well, would also benefit the parents. Parents who have left unworthy children have left "dust" behind.'

858 709 My informant went on to say: 'Children are the glory of this world, as the Koran says "Money and children are the joy of this life". Another statement of the Koran says: "God give us a good thing in this world and a good thing in the next world". The Koran interpreters consider that, in this context, "the good thing of this world" implies children. Children are also referred to as sowing seeds, as it is through these seeds that the corn reproduces itself.'

593 554 [595] As for the wife, she attains her proper status only as a mother, and a childless woman is in an insecure position, as her husband is socially justified in remarrying, to have children. For a newly-married couple to have a child is a step towards partaking of some individuality in the larger family circle. The wife is referred to as 'mother of the children' and whenever a man is asked about his wife, she is frequently referred to also as the 'mother of the first-born boy' and the same applies also to the father, and this reference is more common in public gatherings.

842 My informant, Mahmoud, told me that there were ten childless women in the village and that they were therefore known by everybody. Out of these ten, two were living with husbands who had taken a second wife. He continued, 'A childless woman is usually like a she-camel who does not conceive, puts on more and more flesh, and gets younger every day—but not fruitful, as she can never "lengthen" her husband's neck amongst the menfolk. She is a sore eye to her family. The proper woman is the one who [156] is an "envelope for conception".' It is not strange, then, that a fat woman [826] is a desirable ideal, as she has more room to bear the child, lactates abundantly and gives more warmth to her children.

858 593 562 It is appropriate here to discuss the differential value of boys and girls in Silwa. The importance of the boys' work in the fields as a major contribution to the family's means of subsistence was discussed earlier. Moreover, the boys are considered to be the best capital investment for ageing parents. They are expected to form the basis for social and economic [736] security, not only for their parents, but also for any widowed sisters. This [737] duty to support their parents or those female relatives who have no other man to support them is legally enforced by the religious courts. This question gives rise to endless disputes; one hears of parents suing their children for support according to their means, or at least threatening to sue them. No such obligations devolve on the daughters, as they are wives of their husbands, and no claim can be made against them.

554 562 Boys are also an added qualification for social prestige. A man with more sons backing him up can always speak with more authority and ranks high in the community's esteem even if he owns less land. Fathers who have

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seven sons or more are always held up as a model and an enviable ideal, and one of the most favourable prayers to any man is to wish him 'seven sons and to perform seven pilgrimages'.

The greater status deriving from having boys shows itself in the difference of presents given to the midwife on the birth of a boy compared with those on the birth of a girl. The announcer of the birth of a boy to the father would ask him for a present, and would warmly congratulate him, wishing him to have a brother for example for the boy if he is the first one, or to complete the seven. In the case of a girl, the father is usually teased by telling him: 'May she never sneeze.' The saying is that 'a boy is a joy even if he is stillborn'. Another saying runs, 'A boy who dies is better than seven girls'. It is also interesting to notice that fathers and mothers swear 'by the neck' of their boys, and not girls (by their lives), as one of the most effective and binding oaths. Girls jeer at their playmates who have no brothers, and swear by the life of their own brothers.

The fear of having a daughter is mainly connected with the sense of 'shame' which a girl might bring to her family, especially before her marriage. It is the responsibility of the male line of her family to arrange her marriage, and clothe and feed her if she is not married. If any disgraceful rumour about a girl or a woman spreads in the village it is the father as well as the husband who has to discipline the girl or bear the social stigma. Girls at a very early stage, on seeing a moth hovering round the fire, are taught to repeat 'Fire is preferable to shame'. It is also said that a girl is brought up only to be taken away by a man (when she is married) and this means a loss to the family.

Yet the value of the girls is often justified and rationalized by other arguments. On being told of the birth of a girl, a father would say, 'She is God's creation; and who knows where the blessedness lies?' A girl is always referred to in this context of the evaluation of the two sexes as 'the one who will usher her parents into the shade' (i.e. coolness) when they get old, as the girl is considered more compassionate than the boy. My informant, Mahmoud, told me that 'visiting one's daughter is usually an occasion for having either a pot of tea or some food; she can never let her father leave her husband's house without "wetting his throat".' Mothers are very keen on having daughters to help them in domestic work, by sending them on errands to neighbours' homes.

One of the folk songs refers to the daughter as 'appointing her father as the sole arbiter in a gathering'—which is her engagement gathering when the father fixes the bride-price 'which is the daughter's weight of gold and silver'. The song goes on to say that through the daughter 'the father stretches his roots to feed other places' and thus the girl provides a means of extending kinship relations through her marriage. What the song does not explicitly say is that a girl is no financial strain on her parents as they do not provide any marriage payment for her, and hence her marriage is not a burden on the family as with the boy.

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not only during the first forty days but which is also sustained till the arrival of the next baby. According to the family structure in the village, there are invariably at least two grown-up women attending to the rearing of the child, or sharing in the child's care, e.g. maternal grandmother, paternal grandmother, sisters, paternal or maternal aunts, or brothers' wives. As the newly born baby, or even any child, has no special cradle, cot, or bed, it always sleeps beside the mother or sits on her lap. After the forty days it may be picked up by relatives.

During the third and fourth month, the child is usually held horizontally with the mother's hands underneath its legs and head. During the fourth month it is held vertically, supported under the arms, and can be carried against the mother's breast, being supported with her hands under the buttocks. During the fifth month, he is normally held astride the mother's hip.

Nursing is one of the first basic needs of the child which in this community conforms to no schedule. It is guided only by two principles. The first is that the child is given the breast whenever it cries. The second is that it is suckled when the breast becomes 'compassionate', in other words when the mother's breast becomes full. It is said that when there is 'compassion' in the breast the child is hungry, and therefore the mother must offer it to her baby. The reciprocity between the baby's need and the breast is recognized to be one of the determining factors in suckling. It is true that in Silwa, as in Artas, the mother's breast is the symbol of compassion.[1] Nothing is more binding in the mother-child relationship than the memories of 'stomach enveloping' and 'breast-feeding' which are symbols invoked by mothers to remind their sons or daughters to be obedient, or to come to their help in old age. 'I enveloped you for nine months and have fed you with my breast' is supposed to be one of the most effective and compelling entreaties. In this connection, Ali related the story of the Caliph Harun al Rashid and Gafar al Barmaki, his vizier, whom the former decided to kill, and imprison or disperse the rest of his family, after he feared that they were plotting to remove him from the Caliphate. Harun carried out his decisions in spite of the entreating of Gafar's mother, who had breast-fed the Caliph and who had implored him by the milk she gave him, and the locks of his hair she had cut off and kept with her. 'This is', remarked Ali, 'an example of tyranny that overrides one's duties towards his breast-feeder who is like a mother.'

It is because women can provide their babies with milk that they are considered to be endowed with compassion. This is one of the tangible arguments for the value of having girls, who would be a source of compassion not only for their children, but also for their parents.

The time and frequency of suckling varies from day to day and from child to child. A child who often cries is regarded as a weakling and hence its need for more suckling. A mother of a four-month-old child, who was

[1] H. Granqvist, *Birth and Childhood among the Arabs*, p. 107.

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Chapter Five

THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND EVENTS OF CHILDHOOD

In this chapter the main characteristics and events of childhood affecting both the social and psychological aspects of the individual's personality in Silwa are to be discussed. Infancy, with which we dealt in the last chapter, is regarded as the three or four years of the person's life at the end of which, whatever the family and individual variations may be, the infant is weaned, begins to talk and responds to adult commands. The following years are those of childhood until the age of twelve or thirteen, when the boy or the girl, at puberty, enters the adolescent stage.

In our consideration of the process of 'growing up' of children, there is hardly need to stress the fact that the process is not identical for all children. It is beyond any question that there are certain forces and conditions that bring about 'the distinctive personality constellations', e.g. the death of a sibling older or younger, loss of a mother, a father, state of child's health, child's birth order, age of parents at the time of child's birth.[1] These distinctive factors with their concomitant individual differences are recognized by the villagers. A child may be referred to as a 'child of old parents' (waldat 'ajayiz) and is usually characterized by being precocious in his development, or a 'child brought forth in the years of plenty or in the lean years', the former possessing easy and happy disposition, while the latter is expected to be nagging and irritable. In the next two chapters, however, the common prevailing forces that leave their impact on the personality development of the village children are discussed.

One of the main characteristics of this period of childhood is the pressure of sibling rivalry which is socially recognized, being evidenced in certain symbolic forms of wear, folk-lore, and symptoms of sickness. Sibling rivalry, however, is not peculiar to the child's growing up in Silwa, but, as demonstrated by Levy's projective doll-playing tests, 'represents a

[1] Clyde Kluckhohn, 'Personality Formation among the Navaho Indians', in *Sociometry*, Vol. IX, 1946, pp. 150–1.

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865 593 universal experience when a mother has more than one child in her own care'.[1] The peculiar side of it in this community is the way it is acknowledged and its use as an incentive in child development. In this treatment of the manifestations of sibling rivalry and the important part it plays in the formation of personality, no test of the Levy type was administered, but the cultural symbols and condensations were taken to offer ready-made data comparable to Levy's projective test.[2]

It is assumed in Silwa that the knee-baby is always jealous of the lap-baby, and the yard-baby is jealous of the knee-baby, and that this jealousy is irrespective of sex.[3] The absolute order of birth is maintained as the source of sibling rivalry and in the case of the death of the knee-baby, for example, the yard-baby will not be jealous of the lap-baby. The process is thus juxtapositional, each child always rivalling the immediately younger one who is 'above him' and who is also described as the one 'who pushes him away'. Jealousy is also believed to be one-way, as expressed in the [152] apprehensiveness of the older towards the younger, and not the converse, and therefore it is always the older who is jealous of the younger.

It is considered, according to one of my female informants, that sibling rivalry is essential in the process of a child's growth, particularly for the [853] boys. In the case of the first child, the mother usually induces him to suckle by offering her breast to a strange child. My informant went on to tell me of the folk story of the mother who had only one child and did 865 not bear any more. At the age of seven, however, her son displayed the physical and social maturity of a child of four, being a weakling who knew nothing about the world. This retarded growth worried his mother who consulted various people as to the best way of treating him. At last, she was advised by an old woman to send him to another household, which had many children in it, in another village and to keep him there for a year. During the first few weeks the boy used to sit with the other children round a dish of food, without getting sufficient to eat. Thus he was almost starved, his condition deteriorating. After that period, however, his rivalry with the other children was stimulated and he began to compete with them in eating, playing and running errands. Through this method his development accelerated, and as he became lively his mother took him back home.

It is believed that the arrival of a newborn baby helps to free the next [862] oldest baby from his mother and thus assist its weaning, otherwise it would CDD 'stick to its mother's neck'. As the terminal baby, or, as it is sometimes

[1] See William Henry, 'The Thematic Apperception Technique in the Study of Culture-Personality Relations', in *Genetic Psychology Monographs*, Vol. XXXV. See also Susan Isaacs, *Social Development in Young Children*, London, 1937.

[2] Benjamin D. Paul, 'Symbolic Sibling Rivalry in a Guatemalan Indian Village', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. LII, 1950, p. 205.

[3] These stages of child development are adopted by Margaret Mead, 'Age Patterning in Personality Development', in *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, Vol. XVII, 1947, pp. 230–40.

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as the terminal baby, or, as it is sometimes called, the 'last of the bunch', has no rival, it is usually suckled longer and is considered to be more demanding, thus requiring more protection and pampering since its natural growth is not assisted by the stimulus of rivalry. It is true that the last-born child in a family is regarded as spoilt, and in normal social life this fact could be used by others to account for its shortcomings.

It is also acknowledged that the youngest child becomes jealous immediately his mother's abdomen becomes enlarged on pregnancy and he is usually told of the forthcoming event. The mother hums phrases expressing her sympathy with the child's jealousy and anxiety in store for him. The custom, though not so common now as it was twenty years ago, is for the older child after the birth of a new baby to wear round its neck one, two, or three cubes of sulphur called cubes of jealousy, wrapped in a piece of leather. This is supposed to minimize the dangers of excessive jealousy, as although jealousy is a healthy drive for growth, its excess might have ill effects on the child. It could induce diarrhoea, swellings, lack of appetite, temper tantrums, and sleeplessness.[1]

Such symptoms of illness caused by jealousy are diagnosed, and a traditional cure is administered by the mother, grandmother or an experienced old woman. The cure is called 'kurfa', which literally means something that dispels aggressiveness and sulkiness. The 'kurfa' consists of an egg fried in oil with garlic and spices which is given to the child to eat, usually when his suckling sibling is asleep. Now the jealous child is in complete possession of his mother's attention; she feeds him on the 'kurfa', while he sits on her lap. He is told of how 'awful' his sibling is, and how 'nice and grown-up' he himself looks. After finishing his egg, the child's body is rubbed with the same cooking oil to ease the tensions of envy in his body. These titbits of food represent the few instances in which the knee-baby is allowed to recapture fully his mother's love and to dethrone his younger sibling. It is a symbolic acceptance of a break in the normal behaviour of the knee-baby, rewarded by regressive gratification. This 'kurfa' meal is a propitiatory means of enabling the older child to withstand the strains of sibling rivalry, and to accept the newborn baby with whom he has to identify himself later, either by looking after it or by taking it out to play. Such propitiation becomes more significant in the process of growing up when it is realized that the child is not allowed to manifest his anxiety over, or his deprivation from, his mother on pain of punishment. Such states of temper, tantrums or sulkiness are sometimes dealt with by the mother pretending to strike the younger baby who is the cause of the child's troubles. The great deal of roughness and aggression displayed in children's play outside the home could be considered as a cultural outlet for some of their repressed hostility towards their siblings and parents.

[1] 'Swelling and outbursting' are used figuratively in the villagers' language to denote jealousy. Especially in women's altercations, one hears the phrase, 'You have a swelling from me', meaning 'you are jealous'.

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865 593 Moreover, it was significant that when my informant declared that the rivalry was an essential incentive in the process of growing up, she added that it would enable the child to stand up to its rivals on becoming an adult. The use of sibling rivalry could also be related to the brothers' avoidance of each other, especially in formal gatherings, and also to the cultural expectation of brothers' friction and wranglings which are quite frequent amongst adults in the village.[1]

Certain families in the village try to provoke sibling rivalry, if it is not manifested strongly between children, by giving the older sibling a nickname, 'A ram which drinks from the water, left after baking'—meaning that he is good for nothing, while calling the younger sibling a camel—being a useful animal, and thus motivating the former to conform to what is expected from a boy of his age. In one of the families, Hassan, who is four years old, and Taha, who is two years old, are two brothers; one called 'Hassan al-dalihi'—the stupid one, while Taha is labelled 'al-nasih'—the clever. This nicknaming was due, according to their mother, to the fact that Hassan was seldom as alert as other boys of his age, and this nickname was supposed to shake him up. The writer noticed that Hassan was always asked to do things with reference to his younger brother. His mother would say: 'Eat this before Taha takes it', and this was accompanied by a movement towards Taha as if she was going to give him the food. Sometimes she would say: 'Take it, or I will give it to Taha', even if the latter were not present. In another house, the mother asked Fatima, the naughty girl, who was reluctant to comb her hair, to come to her before Sakina, the good girl, did so. Fatima was still disobedient, and so the mother started combing Sakina's hair, and immediately Fatima dashed towards her mother and lowered her head for combing. The normal procedure in giving nicknames is to call the younger child with a self-deprecating word, to appease [551] the older one, which is compatible with the hierarchical structure of the family. Reversing this order, by giving a good name to the younger, is only resorted to for the purpose of fostering the desired amount of sibling rivalry indispensable in the villagers' views for healthy development. To experience rivalry with a sibling or cousin is regarded as making the child grow to be a 'hot' man, in contrast to one who is 'blunt'—who is not easily moved or provoked. It is also noticed that a visitor, on meeting a child of the house, usually asks him the hackneyed question: 'Who is better, you or your brother?' One is justified in considering the emphasis on sibling [867] rivalry as a cultural means of motivating the child to abandon his babyish attitudes and behave according to his age.

It is worth mentioning that the motivation of rivalry connected with the presence, actual or potential, of another person, is one of the strong incentives for appropriate behaviour, which combines social conformity with a [626] high-pressure ego development.

[1] M. Fortes remarks that among the Tallensi, open recognition of sibling rivalry prevents it from turning into a disruptive element in the relations of siblings. *The Web of Kinship*, footnote, p. 233.

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high-pressure ego development. The sense of importance and worthiness is continually hammered into the children's minds through comparing them with either their sibling or other children.[1] It is no exaggeration to say that competitiveness in Silwa receives its first stimulus from sibling relationships, and is expressed in the popular saying that 'children who come on top of one another cannot get along with each other'. Siblings of different ages are expected to play in different age groups, especially after the age of six or seven. Although there is no institutionalized favouritism for the first son with regard to inheritance, for example, he is usually the most welcome member of the family as in his later life he will be his father's representative. It is no accident, then, that the first-born son receives more attention, as is usually expressed in his ceremonies of naming, circumcision, and wedding.

Together with this sibling relationship envisaged in a series of children chasing each other, one can hardly fail to note the difference of treatment between boys and girls in general. These disparities between the treatment of the two sexes are not mainly based on the superiority of the male sex or the female, but are largely founded on the relevance of the two sexes to the perpetuation of the family name and their respective economic activities.[2] The popular saying goes to the effect that the daughter's son should not receive much attention from his grandfather as such attention is wasted. However, it does not unduly worry parents in any way if their daughters do not show behaviour indications of rivalry during childhood. It will become clearer, as we proceed, that girls only enjoy relative indulgence during infancy, especially with regard to their comparatively longer period of suckling. But from childhood onwards they are expected to approach sociological adulthood more quickly than the boys.[3]

The second characteristic of the period of childhood is connected with the decreasing amount of care and attention given to the child by its mother. This is evidenced by the children's appearance during this stage of development. They are less clean in body and clothes, and it is not an unusual sight to find nasal mucus on children's faces. Mothers justify this neglect on the grounds that the child at this stage, where he is usually out with other children and thus exposed to the public, should not appear attractive for fear of the evil eye. This lack of interest in children's appearance usually continues until the age of nine, ten or eleven. Thereafter an unkempt or shabby child would be a disgrace to his parents. The renewed interest, especially in the child's clothes, after the age of ten, is related also to the need for covering the organs of reproduction by wearing

[1] For concrete statements of children concerning sibling rivalry, see Appendix VIII, 'Stewart Emotional Response Test', and Appendix X, 'Story Completion Test'.

[2] See Chapter I.

[3] It is assumed here that rivalry is socially inherited and is passed on from parents to their children. 'A mother through her attitude continues the old battle, and in the competitive struggles of her children she relives the competitive struggles of her childhood.' R. H. Hilgard, 'Sibling Rivalry and Social Heredity', in *Psychiatry*, Vol. 14, 1951.

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855 854 be explained as a result of the cultural pressure for a large family, the achievement of which is threatened by the high death rate among children. Parents feel that they have done their duty towards the child's care immediately he is able to walk and talk, and the rest of his development is left to God's protection. Moreover, the relatively low mortality rate amongst sucklings in Silwa is due to the fact that they depend mainly upon their mother's milk, while after weaning, adult food is given to the [196] children which cannot be an adequate substitute for the mother's milk because of its unsuitability and deficiency. Yet it must be noted here that 195 children in the province of Aswan are very much undernourished compared with the normal healthy development of other more fortunate children. They are ten centimetres (about 4 inches) less in height, and five kilograms (about 12 pounds) less in weight, and the percentage of haemoglobin in their blood is only 40 per cent.[1]

859 A third important characteristic of this period of childhood is the integration of the boy or the girl with the play group and age mates. About the age of three, the child's attachment to his mother is expected to be over, [866] and this means gradually increasing its contacts with its age group outside the household, and thus the child directs itself, first to its elder siblings and relatives, and then gradually to other children in its play activities. The child may be led by hand or straddled on the shoulder by an older sister to watch other children playing, or taken to defaecate where other children do the same thing. The authority of the older sibling plays a dominant 857 593 part in shaping the child's attitudes from now onwards. The older sisters or brothers act as guardians for their younger siblings; they soothe them when they cry, protect them from interference from other boys or girls. While older boys are playing, one might hear one of them saying: 'Your brother is crying, and I'll have nothing to do with him, you are his brother and you should quieten him.' It is accepted that if the older brothers and sisters are about, other boys and girls hardly ever interfere with the younger siblings for fear of being blamed for their crying or injury. It must be pointed out here that boys are usually less burdened with the care of their younger brothers compared with girls, and this is probably one of the reasons that gives the boys freer scope for movement and rough play.

The younger boys and girls form the fringe of their older siblings' play-groups, but gradually they start to form their own groups, and imitate their elders. One finds that younger boys of five or six might be playing with their older brothers in one game, but one hardly finds boys of eight or nine in the same play group as their older brothers of the age of twelve, thirteen or fourteen. On the whole, siblings after the age of seven or eight usually prefer to go to different places for their games, and till that age, the basis of play is blood relationship and neighbourhood. A stranger boy who wants to join other children in their play is either introduced to the

[1] Ministry of Health Statistics quoted by M. Khattab, in a speech in the Upper House of Parliament, in *Al-Ahram* (Egyptian daily paper), 26 December 1940.

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play group as a relative, or warned against joining them on the grounds of their being strangers.

Furthermore an age group can only extend itself, though not freely or without reserve, to the age group directly senior to it.[1] In other words, boys, for example, may be seen playing or sitting with adolescents or young unmarried men, but are not expected to mix with grown-up men. Adolescents and young men may also be seen sitting on the fringe of an adult gathering, though very infrequently. At night a man may be chatting with a group of older boys, but always sitting on the fringe of their gathering, as an indication of his aloofness. Such behaviour related to the three age groups in the village is expressed in the admonition that one 'should not exceed the limits in his behaviour'. For example, a boy who passes by a gathering of adults sprawling on the ground is not supposed to greet them, much less pass between them. Rikabi, a boy of twelve years, approached a meeting of neighbours near his home, and greeted them by saying 'Peace be upon you'. This action annoyed his father as well as the others, and provoked the father to reply: 'Go away, may peace crush you.' In this case, the boy was trying to act like a grown-up, but such precociousness is not the accepted behaviour from a boy of his age. Had he been seventeen or eighteen years his greetings would have been accepted and considered praiseworthy.

Terms of courtesy are not expected among the children themselves and avoidance is the best way of showing courtesy between adults and children. With the impact of urban life, polite children are expected to say 'Thank you' or 'May God increase your blessings' to their elders, while the latter seldom show their appreciation of the children's assistance for them, which if ever expressed would be couched in kinship terms such as 'May God increase thy blessings; thou art the master of thy uncle'.

The fourth characteristic of this period of childhood is the striking interest and respect of children for food. It is quite frequent to see boys and girls inside or outside the house holding in their hands a piece of bread or an onion and eating it while they play. They may be also seen tantalizing each other by the type of bread they have, priding themselves on their mother's good baking. Children, on the whole, tend to be preoccupied and interested in food. This shows itself in the children's ordinary conversation, in the amount of details they give in relating a folk story with food themes occurring in it, in their excessive delight in telling about a good meal that they had or that they are going to have. Feasts and ceremonies are first recalled as occasions for excessive good food. Even in both adults' and children's dreams, food is an important element in their manifest content.[2] Children prefer certain relatives to others because they offer them food and tea; they share food with those children whom they like and refuse to share it with those whom they dislike.

[1] See Chapter II for the three age groups in the village.
[2] See Appendix XI, 'A Note on Dreams', and Appendices VIII and X.

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852 867 [593] occasion, even if they live with the father in the same household. Dispute between brothers or sisters is usually an irrelevant factor in the exchange of mutual contributions which are morally compulsory on such occasions. The ideal of the family solidarity must be expressed, at least formally at public ceremonies. The sociological significance of the ceremony cannot be exaggerated, as it must take place even in the case of children whose [826] [776] foreskin is congenitally contracted or damaged by disease. Although such children are believed to be circumcised by the angels, the ceremony is still held, even without any operation on the child.

852 779 Traditionally, one of the main justifications for holding the ceremony is the religious significance attached to it throughout the whole Moslem world. To be a Moslem, it is believed, is to be circumcised as distinguished from the non-Moslems, who for the most part are not circumcised. However, there is no text in the Koran that enjoins circumcision upon the Moslem, and it is only mentioned in the prophetic tradition. It is maintained that circumcision was the practice not only of the Prophet Mohammed, but all previous prophets, such as Abraham, Noah, Hud, Saleh, Joseph, Moses, and Solomon. In the prophetic sayings there is no fixed time for the performance of circumcision, as amongst the Jews; it is, however, preferable to have it done before the boy attains maturity. It is reported that the Prophet said, 'Abraham, the friend of the Merciful, was the first man who entertained guests, the first man who underwent circumcision, the first man who shortened his moustache, and the first man who saw grey hairs. He asked, on seeing the grey hairs: "O Lord, what is this?" The Almighty and Glorious Lord said: "Dignity, O Abraham." He said: "O Lord, increase dignity in me."' Another prophetic tradition says, 'Circumcision is my way for men, but is merely ennobling for women'. It is also reported that the Prophet told a woman who was just converted into Islam and was thinking of being circumcised, 'Don't inflict trouble on yourself, because that is painful to a wife, but pleasing to a husband'.[1]

852 [779] The chain of authorities for most of the Prophet's dicta about circumcision is more often than not weak, and one is justified in regarding them as open to question. The four Schools of Moslem Law differ as to the obligatory nature of circumcision.[2] The practice, however, was widespread, though not universal, in pagan Arabia, and to be uncircumcised —'aghral' or 'aghlaf'—was thought disgraceful. Modern educated Moslems might justify circumcision on hygienic grounds, but the writer did not get any such explicit or implicit explanation from the villagers. For [783] the latter, it literally means religious purification, which makes the person

[1] *Mishkat-al-Masabih*, English translation by al-Hag Maulana-Fazlul Karim, Vol. I, pp. 737–8.

[2] *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Article, 'Circumcision (Muhammadan)', by D. S. Margoliouth. In the same source under 'Circumcision (Ancient Egypt)', it is mentioned that this ritual was practised in Ancient Egypt, although there is no decisive evidence with regard to either its generality or the nature of its practice.

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867 a son meeting his father after a long absence, as well as the greeting of adults for religious men and those who are believed to be endowed with 'baraka'—holiness.

Whilst in the first five or six years the child's respect for its parents and elders is inculcated mainly through physical gestures and intimacy, the respect later on is expected in terms of a decrease in word intimacy and physical proximity. Moreover, certain manners must be observed, such as walking behind the father or an elder and not abreast of him, standing up or at least sitting properly on the ground on his approach, dismounting from donkey-back on seeing the father in a formal gathering, and so on. Whether in attending to the hand-washing of guests, the distribution of tea amongst them, or in shaking hands with them, a fairly definite order of precedence is observed by the child and even by adults themselves. On the whole, with the progress of the child in age, details of etiquette are gradually enforced upon him. It is also interesting to note in this respect that a father when taking his son of four or five years to the field, would make him ride behind him and not in front, and one cannot argue that this is merely a matter of convenience as fathers who take their sons in front of them are considered to be spoiling them.

It is important here to distinguish between two categories of behaviour with regard to respect relationships, and this distinction is mainly related to whether there are any outsiders or public onlookers. The child, for instance, is allowed a certain amount of latitude in conforming to the external tokens of respect to its parents in the intimate circle of the family, for example, to sit on the bed while the father is sitting on the ground, to make himself a nuisance with the mother, or to hit back when she scolds him. Yet this is severely disapproved of and punished if there is a visitor in the house, or if done outside the house. This is the root of the absolute bonds of kinship behaviour on formal occasions. No plea could absolve the person from not fulfilling his obligations towards his relatives on public occasions such as mourning or exchange of gifts on ceremonial occasions. The failure to fulfil such obligations, as the villagers put it, 'makes a special history for the person'. The distinction between formal and informal behaviour gradually recedes as the child grows older and he is supposed to approach progressively for all occasions the formal expectations of behaviour.[1]

● 593 The general pattern of behaviour between the child and its elders is thus largely one of dominance, submission couched in the term 'filial piety'. The filial sentiment, however, is not taught to or expressed by the child in any sentimental phrases. It was a great joke amongst the children [369] in one neighbourhood to repeat statements of an urban child whom they heard saying 'I love my father, I love my mother'. Such open expressions

[1] R. Firth distinguishes between formal and informal behaviour. In the latter there are more individual differences and variations; while the former is enjoined upon each member of the society and the observance and fulfilment of formal behaviour is regarded as the sure test for the harmonious functioning of society. *We, the Tikopia*, p. 173.

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of filial sentiment are considered by the children as one of the ways in which Cairo people spoil their sons and daughters. Children's respect for and devotion to parents must be absolute and unconditional and do not have to be verbalized. Yet, on the other hand, the appeal to please the mother or father is usually invoked to persuade the child to behave properly or to perform certain duties. 'Fetch fuel for mother so that she can say that her daughter is good.' 'Wear this garment so that uncle's people will say they have a good boy.' While the affection of blood relatives is used to stimulate and motivate the child, he is not expected to express his sentiment towards them directly.

During early childhood, kinship terms are learnt, and by the age of five, the children I spoke to were quite capable of telling the categories of paternal uncle and aunt, maternal uncle and aunt, cousins and nephews and nieces. As anthropologists have repeatedly pointed out, the child does not start off in life with a full set of kinship terms, but gradually, and not without difficulty, fits itself into the framework provided for it by its elders.[1] During its development, contacts and associations, a child begins to know what type of behaviour and sentiment is expected from him towards different relatives. In terms of behaviour the above-mentioned children distinguished between those closely-related children with whom they could play freely, more co-operatively, and possibly with more superficial wrangling, and those with whom they could not play in the same way; between those from whom they could demand a piece of bread or a bit of onion, and those from whom they could not; between those who could, without suspecting malicious intentions, accept their curses and those who would resent such curses. They also knew that their close relatives are those by whom they can be protected or punished, and whom they fear and love, and to whose houses they can stray, accepting food without fear of being punished by the parents. One of the children told me that his mother punished him for going with another boy to the latter's house. She rebuked him by saying that those who offered him food would call him a son of beggars, and that it would have been quite different had he gone to his grandfather's people. Children who stray quite often into houses which are not those of close relatives, are sometimes dubbed by their elders as paupers ('fakeers', who roam about and knock at the gate of Allah). Such an excuse is given by the elders to avoid the sense of shame that their children might bring to them. In this way a child is made to learn the difference between the easy flow of mutual obligations between close relatives and the strain of accepting hospitality from distant people which is considered almost as a debt. On such occasions, one also sees the importance of parental obligations towards their children, whose hunger would reflect on their parental duties and prestige.[2]

[1] R. Firth, *We, the Tikopia*, p. 272.

[2] For such connection between hunger and prestige, see Audrey Richards, *Hunger and Work in a Savage Society*, pp. 43–4.

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THE AIMS AND METHODS OF SOCIALIZATION IN SILWA

865 wrangle and quarrel with her, are rude to her, run outside the house and throw stones at the door or climb the wall and swear at her. On the other hand, children feel that the mother is their most reliable source of care 861 and affection, and that she is more accessible and amenable than the 593 father. In this capacity she is the one usually approached for expressing their wishes or asked to mediate between them and the father. Mothers themselves recognize that their treatment of children is different from that of the father. This is epitomized in the mothers' popular saying to their children in persuading them to obey them: 'On the death of my father I eat dates; on the death of my mother I eat hot coal.' In this way the mother tries to win from her offspring assistance and service as she is not invested with the same power of authority as the father. On the other hand, withdrawal from the father, keeping away from his bed while he [867] is asleep, and keeping quiet while he is about the house, is told and retold to children by the mother or older siblings for fear of punishment. The father's authority cannot be flouted; and a change in the tone of his voice must be seriously considered. Although his punishment might be less frequent than that of the mother, yet it is certainly more severely administered. While the former pinches the ear, or the thigh, and seldom slaps, the latter normally slaps and thrashes with a rope or a cane.

861 It is also worth noting here that very little chance is given to the child to justify his misdemeanour, and hardly any effort is made to persuade him to avoid falling into the same error. Moreover, in administering punishment, there is no consistency or regularity; for the same offence the child might be beaten harshly, or his offence allowed to pass unnoticed. This depends, of course, on the parents' mood, or on their feeling towards the child at that particular time.

579 Such methods for disciplining the child normally lead to the child's attempts to tell lies or go for things in a roundabout way to evade punishment. He would swear that he has not committed a fault and that it is someone else who is responsible for it, or that he was forced by older or [859] stronger boys to do it.[1] Deceptive tricks are frequently adopted in games when, for instance, a boy tries to frighten another boy by saying that the latter's father is approaching with a stick and thus seek to compel him to leave the game. An older boy, in trying to deceive younger children, would run in front of them shouting in terror, 'The Silowa is coming, the Silowa is coming', and the young boys would disperse. One boy might tell a group of boys an untrue story, and if the teller succeeds in making his listeners 'swallow' it he would vaunt his triumph over them by saying, 'I've been telling lies. I've cut your ears off—Kaddabt 'alaikum, gattat wadanaikum.'

[1] It is interesting to note that in the Kuttab (Koran school), Kuttab sheikh enquires from one of the boys about his misdemeanour and the other boys volunteer without being asked to give evidence confirming the boy's offence. With this also goes constant attempts of children to correct each other's behaviour or ways of learning or attention.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

In Artas, the Palestinian village studied by Granqvist, the uneasiness in this stage of adjustment presents itself in a different way. As marriage in Artas is in the patrilocal residence, the bride, before leaving her family, would make demands on the bridegroom's family and make sure that her family's wishes have been fulfilled, before she is placed on the camel going to her bridegroom's house.[1]

As for the bride, she now starts her seclusion in the house till she brings forth a child and is never allowed to go out and never seen by a married man, even her husband's father and her married brothers. Her main job is to attend to her husband, to receive him when he knocks at the door, and to serve food to him. One of the main difficulties of newly married girls is their adjustment to the new situation, where they must break away from their previous life and assume a responsible role. The difficulties, however, are smoothed out in the matrilocal marriage period, where the bride's mother is really the one who, behind the scenes, provides her son-in-law with his requirements. This attention of the mother to her son-in-law usually makes her unmarried sons and daughters jealous, as epitomized in the common saying referred to earlier. Under her mother's supervision and instructions, the bride comes to learn the appropriate conduct of womanhood. It is probably during this period that she receives sex information as the occasion arises. Moreover, her previous playmates do not sever their contacts with her; they still go to see her and 'have a hand dip of henna' with her; but she is not allowed to join their games or play with 'toys'. Other women, especially relatives, come to see her, give her advice and praise her 'halo' and jewellery. On the whole it seems that the girl comes under her mother's authority at this stage more than any other stage of her development. During this period of seclusion the direct influence of the mother is undoubtedly supreme, even much more than the husband. The latter, in fact, is not expected to linger in his bride's house. Except for his mealtimes, he should not remain in the house except when he comes in late at night after finishing his entertainments with his friends.

Indeed, the first year of marriage, for both the husband and wife, bristles with difficulties that may lead to divorce. According to my informant, Mahmoud, marriages are more prone to break down during the first year than at any later period. This statement seems plausible, since during the first year especially, the economic, social and psychological adjustments or maladjustments not only between the spouses, but also between their families, develop.[2] The amount of talk, gossip and vitupera-

[1] Hilma Granqvist, *Marriage Conditions in a Palestinian Village*, Vol. II, Helsingfors, 1935, p. 72.

[2] For a well-documented discussion on the economic, social and psychological factors curbing the Moslem's nominal freedom of divorce, see Hilma Granqvist, *op. cit.*, Chapter X. According to official statistics the ratio of divorce per thousand of the population of Egypt for the five years between 1942 and 1946 was 8·3, 9·2, 9·6, 8·9, 8·1 respectively. *Pocket Census of 1948*, Govt. Press, Cairo, 1950, p. 47 (in Arabic).

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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586 593 tion, especially amongst the womenfolk, might appear tragi-comic when they harp endlessly upon the shortcomings of the spouses, and their respective families. Complaints and gossip are heard about things such as the inability to provide the right amount of henna for the bride; or the bride's family's bad cooking of the groom's pigeons; the quality of the girl's jewellery and endless small things which reveal the difficulties of the adjustments of the individual family to an equally important wider circle of the joint family.

586 The following table shows that the percentages of divorce for the whole country reach their highest during the first two years of marriage.

TABLE IV

Relation between divorce and the duration of marriage between 1942 and 1946 in Egypt

Duration of marriage	1942 %	1943 %	1944 %	1945 %	1946 %
Less than a month	4·20	4·31	4·46	3·88	3·99
One–six months	14·60	15·70	16·30	14·50	14·20
Six months–one year	12·50	13·10	14·40	14·60	13·05
One–two years	18·4	18·10	20·90	20·30	20·30
Two–three years	11·0	11·90	13·60	14·50	13·70
Three–four years	7·55	9·05	8·34	7·82	8·60
Four–five years	5·80	4·87	5·04	5·53	5·40
Five–ten years	15·30	13·10	13·70	12·30	11·90
Ten–fifteen years	5·42	5·23	5·10	4·63	4·74
Fifteen–twenty years	2·42	2·40	2·32	2·12	2·00
Twenty years and more	2·78	2·66	2·38	2·09	2·12[1]

Here a short note on divorce seems necessary. The right and power to divorce one's wife is part of the male ethos in this community. According to Moslem law (Sharia) a man can divorce his wife twice and on both occasions can take her back. If he repeats any formula of divorce three times or says, 'You are divorced threefold' (talga bi attalati), then the divorce is final; and husband and wife can only remarry on certain conditions.[2] Recently, in Egypt, the threefold formula of divorce has come to be regarded as one statement, and husband and wife can reunite immediately after its utterance if they wish.

The word 'divorce' is also used as a conditional oath by men to convince others of the truth of a statement, or to force them to accept an offer or conform to a desire.[3]

[1] These percentages are worked out from the *Pocket Census of 1948*, Govt. Press, Cairo, 1950, p. 50 (in Arabic). [2] Cf. S. G. Fitzgerald, *Muhammadan Law*.
[3] Hilma Granqvist, *Marriage Conditions in a Palestinian Village*, pp. 297–8.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

The following table shows the percentages of monogamous and polygamous marriages among the Moslem population in the country as a whole.

TABLE V

Percentage of monogamous and polygamous marriages

Number of wives	1927	1937
One wife	95·18	96·86
Two wives	4·49	2·95
Three wives	0·29	0·17
Four wives	0·04	0·02[1]

What does it feel like to be a newly married bride, confined to her house, with the occasional temptations of stealing a peep through the holes of the door onto the outside world? What is her complex emotion on seeing her husband returning home or while serving him, washing his hands, watching him eat, etc.? Does she fear her first sexual experience? Does her husband show an affection towards the girl in sexual intercourse? Are other erogenous zones used in sex? What are the overtones of small talk, if any, between husband and wife in the midst of the recurrent experiences of sexual intercourse which is one of the great pleasures in such a culture?[2] Such issues are significant to a study of the factors influencing the interaction of culture and personality. The writer cannot claim to give any substantial answer to such questions as the whole issue is taboo and it would be impossible for a person who is normally part of this culture to raise such points without endangering his prestige.

By getting married, the bridegroom and bride have achieved the hallmark of adulthood; and this brings satisfaction to one's parents. The transfer of the wife to the patrilocal residence is usually thought of after she bears a child, and by then her mother prepares for her a special headcover (tawada) to enable her to go out. The wife's settlement in her husband's house does not end her connection with her family, as it is her father's home which is always opened for her as a safeguard against any maltreatment from her husband or other members of his family.[3]

[1] *Pocket Census of 1948*, p. 12.

[2] It is a well-known fact that some newly wed husbands become impotent during their first sexual experiences and are usually then called tied (marbout). In such cases, a religious man would be invited to read for him, or write a charm which he wears under his clothes. Sometimes when this fact is known, a friend of this married man would go and tell him that he has 'tied' him; and for this the friend would invite the husband to a meal of pigeons.

[3] When a wife forsakes her husband's home for her father's she is known as 'hardasi', and mediators or an Arab council would try to reconciliate the two sides. For a similar situation see Hilma Granqvist, *op. cit.*, pp. 225–32.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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APPENDIX I

159 in the Kuttab to improve his handwriting, as the maxim of the pious ancestors runs, 'good handwriting increases the clarity of truth'.

In the whole of Ali's life religion has meant much to him in terms of personal security. His need of recognition and for prestige is certainly satisfied by his knowledge of the Sacred Book and other sources of religious information. With his sensitive and shy nature he could not have integrated his personality except through this religious foundation. Moreover, Ali's subsistence resources have been secure so far as he is still dependent on his father and mother. At the end of every lunar month his older brother, Ahmad, carries Ali's family allowance of corn to the latter's house and no serious quarrel has occurred between him and his father or brother on these grounds. The harmony of relationship between Ali and his father's family could be also attributed to the fact that Ali still lives with his wife's people, who are about five hundred yards from his father's house, while his brother Ahmad lives in the father's household. Ali's father is about sixty-five years old, and is still a robust man, who works in the field, and is considered by his family as tight-fisted.

In contrast to his brother, Ali cares much more for his clothes and appearance in general, and this is one of the reasons his father sends him to deputize for him on various occasions. Moreover, while his brother has been a member of the 'Nakshabandi' mystic sect, Ali has never joined it, as his religious experience has been satisfied through his knowledge of the Koran and literacy, while his comparatively illiterate brother finds his satisfaction in the emotional ecstasy that is invoked by the repetitive rhythm of the mystic circle (zikr). Ali probably had not joined the mystic 593 order because his brother was already a member, and normally brothers are not found together in the Order. On asking Sheikh Hussein, who is the local head of the Order about this fact, I was told: 'Brothers do not come to the Order for the fear of the evil eye. Jacob advised his seven sons never to enter from the same door or follow each other; they should enter from different doors and always spread themselves.' Structurally, this is in harmony with the cultural values of hierarchy, order, and respect relations between brothers, as physical proximity between them in sitting or eating in public is not considered polite.

MAHMOUD

Mahmoud is illiterate, suspicious, and a proud man, so I had compiled his life history by asking him questions that would not arouse any scruples in his mind. He does not know when he was born, he remembers only that he just managed to escape the days of forced military conscription during the First World War, being two or three years younger than the eligible age.[1] This means that he is about fifty years old. My relation to

[1] These days are known in the villagers' language as 'assultah al askaria', when people from the village were conscripted to work on the military roads or as camp sentinels in Palestine during the First World War. 902

1:Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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434
511
[041]

APPENDIX III

The summer crop is only of one kind, millet.[1]

Product		*Price per unit in £E*	*Total*
6 ardabs	..	3.50	£E 21

With every feddan a farmer can own the following animals:

1. A cow, which every two years would bring a calf worth £E6 income per year 3
2. A camel, which every three years would bring a camel worth £E6 per year 2
3. Five sheep, each bringing two lambs a year worth 30 piastres 3

Total income £E8

Thus the total income from cultivating an acre and the profits derived from animals per year amounts to .. £E61
Subtract for taxes and sowing seeds .. 1.50

Net income £E59.50

And as the *per capita* property of land is about one-third of an acre, then the *per capita* income from agriculture is about £E20. Moreover, according to the Postmaster, the village received (during the period of my field work) between £E400 and £E600 per month from those relatives who work in town, which, distributed per head, would make the total income per head £E21 per year.

511 On the other hand, it was more difficult to assess the *per capita* consumption of food and goods. The difficulty is obvious in a community which is self-sufficing in many ways, and which keeps no written records of its budgets. Expenditure, however, does not vary considerably from person to person in the village, and the following estimate will give an approximate picture.

The consumption of bread has been estimated on the surest criterion [593] which is the amount of crop that a father allows his son in his marital residence to take to his wife and children.

Winter Harvest

Two-thirds ardab of wheat for the husband
One-half ardab of wheat for the wife
One-quarter ardab of wheat for the child under seven
One-half ardab of barley for the husband
One-half ardab of barley for the wife (and chicken)
One-quarter ardab of barley for the child
One-twelfth ardab of beans per person

[262]
[231]

[1] Dates are not included here as they are usually consumed daily by the family. Berseem is not also included in winter crop, being consumed by animals.

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

562 places his family would at once lose their position, and they would
565 be looked down upon as nobodies. To our Western ideas such
521 restrictions are apt to be regarded as a form of tyranny, but it is
507 not a fair judgment. Seclusion is partly a sign of respect among Egyptians, and indicates the value that the men put upon their womenfolk. Most of the women have unfortunately a difficult and
181 dangerous temperament, which, until they have learnt self-control,
562 and have been inspired with higher ideals, makes them anything
152 but an elevating influence in village society.

Though theoretically they are supposed to be entirely in sub-
562 jection to the male sex, in practice they can, and often do, maintain
593 a very firm hold on their husbands. I have known many men who are in mortal terror of their wives. Indeed, I am often inclined to think that it is the poor oppressed Egyptian *man* who has a claim to my sympathy, and that the over-ruled, oppressed wife is somewhat of a myth.

583 More often than not a man marries a girl from his own village, the favourite marriage being with a daughter of his father's brother. On the smallest provocation, some imagined slight, for
593 example, a girl will run off to her father's or brother's house, and
578 remain there until her husband, from fear of mischief being made against him in the village by his wife's relations, is induced to agree to do whatever his wife demands of him. She may require him to buy her gold earrings, a nose-ring, an anklet, or fine clothes, and, though a poor man, he may feel obliged to purchase one or
[406] more of these articles for fear of what his wife may do. Many men have run into debt for such reasons.

586 A man of my acquaintance, who owns a certain amount of land
428 and is by way of being one of the rather superior people of his
581 village, divorced his wife a year or two ago. She was quite a decent woman, but, her relations being poor, she had no land of her own, and, moreover, her husband's brother had died, bequeathing his widow a *feddān* (acre) of land and a little money. My acquaintance had his eye on this land, which was family property, belonging originally to his father, and the only way he could obtain it was by marrying his brother's widow. He did not want to have two wives, for
[595] it is expensive to keep up such an establishment; also, monogamy is becoming much more common in Egypt, and to have more than one wife is looked upon as rather barbarous even among the peasants. The only thing to do was to get rid of his first wife.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

The poor woman was in great distress, and begged me to intercede for her. I spoke to the man about it, but the *feddān* of land proved to be too much of a temptation to him, and he accordingly obtained his divorce.[1] For some time after this he was ashamed to meet me, and always got out of my way when he knew I was coming to the village. However, his divorced wife was lucky enough to get another husband fairly quickly, and, moreover, one who was in an even better position than her former partner, whom dire vengeance has overtaken in the person of his new wife (Fig. 15). This woman is inordinately jealous, and if her wretched husband is a few minutes later in returning home from his work than she thinks he ought to be she flies into a passion and imagines that he has gone to see his former wife, or, rather, "to look upon her," as she puts it. For this reason she has, on more than one occasion, left his house and gone to her brother's, where she has remained for two or three days before her husband could by any means persuade her to return to him.

FIG. 15. HUSBAND AND JEALOUS WIFE

One day when I was visiting this man's village I was informed that his wife had again left him and remained in her brother's house for six days, because the man had gone to sell some of his *dura* (maize) to a customer living in the street in which his divorced wife now resides with her new husband. The jealous woman had returned to her husband's house only the evening before my visit! Her brother had warmly espoused her cause and told his sister's husband that in future he was not so much as to cast a look in the direction of his former wife!

[1] I think he obtained his divorce on the ground of her childlessness—see Chapter VI.

THE FELLĀḤIN OF UPPER EGYPT

I fancy that there was really no just cause for the woman's jealous suspicions. However, she has reduced her husband to a state of abject fear lest he may arouse her anger—though I did hear that on one occasion he had plucked up sufficient courage to exercise his 'rights' as a husband, and so had administered a whipping for some fault she had committed!

With regard to the division of labour among the sexes, the men certainly have the hardest and largest share, the most strenuous work in the fields being invariably done by them. The women and girls join their menfolk in the cultivation after the sun has risen, but their work is usually confined to the gathering of dry roots, tending the cattle, fetching the water for the household (Fig. 16), and so on. Of course, living is simple among the peasants, so that very strenuous work for the women is not necessary. Much, however, that might be done by them is neglected simply because they are without training in domestic duties and do not realize what important work lies to their hands.

It is, of course, very difficult for the peasants to be as clean as they should be. All the water has to be fetched by the women, often from some distance. No water is laid on in the villages, no bathrooms exist, and the houses lack the most ordinary domestic offices. Excuses must, therefore, be made for the Egyptian women, who have had none of the advantages of the poorest woman in England. The instinct of the Egyptian *fellāḥīn*, however, is to be clean, and the religion of Islām commands ablutions. A man will almost instinctively strip and bathe if he happens to be near a canal or the river, but this privilege is denied to the women, as modesty forbids their bathing in public.

One of the most crying needs in Egypt is that both girls and women should have instruction in the care and upbringing of children. The children undergo a great deal of unnecessary suffering during the early years of their infancy; not because their mothers are lacking in affection, for Egyptian women are, as a rule, devoted mothers, but because they are so hopelessly ignorant.

The results of such ignorance more often than not leave an indelible mark on the child, such as defective eyesight or even absolute blindness. To prevent or cure disease in their children the women will go to one magician after another and purchase from them amulets and written charms, not grudging for a moment the expenditure of what may be to them considerable sums of money.

[Text continues on page 42]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

believe, by cutting her throat. Unfaithfulness in a wife may likewise be punished by death, sometimes death by drowning. If her paramour also is caught they may be thrown into the river or a canal together.

The moral standard is very much lower in some villages than others, and I have observed that villages of pure, or comparatively pure, Egyptian stock are more moral sexually, more honest, and less prone to crimes of violence than are those of mixed negro or Arab origin.

In any case, it is not fair to judge these peasants too harshly. Much cannot be expected of them in their present condition of ignorance, and I believe that until the women can be depended on to exercise a purer and higher influence on their society there is not much prospect of the moral tone of the village communities being raised.

In later years a woman, especially if she has sons, has an honourable position in the family. A man's love and respect for his mother is a marked characteristic among Egyptians, and even after marriage the mother retains the highest place in her son's love and respect. Some years ago I was told that if a man ill-treated his mother and did not show her the greatest honour and respect the whole village would consider him a reprobate. In the married son's household his mother reigns supreme, and the wife who does not show proper respect to her mother-in-law usually has no chance of finding favour with her husband. As an old friend of mine, a man who had always had the greatest veneration and love for his mother, once said to me, " My wife is good, and I am pleased with her, but she must remain there [pointing downward]. My mother is up there [pointing upward]. Did she not carry me here for nine months [pressing his hands on his stomach] ? Did she not endure pain to give me birth, and did she not feed me from her breast ? How could I not love her ? She is always first and above all with me. My wife may change and may lose her love for me. My mother is always the same ; her love for me cannot change."

I fear I may seem to have given a very unpleasant impression in many respects of the peasants of Egypt, but I have dwelt on the darker side of the picture at some length not because there is no brighter side, nor because I am lacking in appreciation of the many excellent qualities to be found in most of my village friends. It is

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

form of hair-cutting for very young boys is dealt with in the following chapter.

After a death the male relatives of the deceased will often allow the hair on the face and head to grow for some time as a sign of mourning.

An Egyptian woman who fears that her facial beauty is beginning to fade, and who wishes to obliterate lines on her face and to obtain a nice pink complexion, will proceed in the following way. She takes a quantity of sugar and a little alum, and boils them together in a small quantity of water till the concoction becomes thick and brown like toffee; the pan is then removed from the fire. When the toffee-like substance is cool enough she takes some of it and pinches it up between her fingers and thumb and applies it to her face, where it sticks; she then pulls it off. She massages the whole of her face in this way, or she may get a friend to do it for her (see Fig. 27), till the skin becomes very pink and also the soft, downy hairs are pulled out. Her husband, on coming home, will admire her complexion and be 'pleased' (*mabsūṭ*) with her, and the woman herself will thus be gratified. I know a woman who, in order to excite her husband's admiration, treats her face in this way every day! After being thus massaged the face is washed with pink soap, and then a pink powder may also be applied. Many of the vainer of the peasant women regularly make use of this treatment in order to beautify themselves. I have myself seen the face

FIG. 27. WOMAN HAVING HER FACE MASSAGED

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
.MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

scripts, one of which he designates the " Book of Adam." He has with great labour collected and written out magical cures and protections for those troubled by *'afārīt*, and these form the contents of one of the books. He learnt his art, so he told me, from another magician, who was not a member of his family, but under whom he served a long apprenticeship.

During my sojourn in Egypt I have been given many accounts of the wonderful cures wrought by magicians on people possessed by *'afārīt*. I wrote the details down when they were given to me, and some of them may be interesting to my readers. The names of the people concerned, and the villages in which they live, are suppressed, in deference to their feelings; indeed, it would be a breach of confidence to divulge them. Such happenings are not usually discussed with foreigners, and were related to me only because I am regarded by the villagers as a trustworthy friend.

A young man in Upper Egypt became very angry with his wife one night while she was sitting in front of the fire cooking the evening meal. In his anger he took a pottery water-bottle (a *ḳulleh*) and struck her with it. In doing this he broke the bottle, and the water and some of the pieces of pottery fell into the fire, extinguishing it. The next moment he heard a voice saying to him, " You have broken the head of one of my children, so I will come into you [*i.e.*, possess you]." The man thereupon became mad, and began to tear his own face, and strike all those who came near him. Some of his relatives, seeing his terrible condition, proceeded to bind his hands behind his back and tie his feet together at the ankles, to prevent him doing further harm to himself or anyone else; but he continued to cry out and to speak meaningless words. His relatives took him to one doctor after another, but they could do him no good, and he continued in the same condition of violent madness.

At last, when he had remained in this state for three months, they went to see a certain sheikh. This man is a magician, and of a charitable character, and they begged him to cure the unfortunate man, pleading at the same time his poverty. The sheikh, who possesses (for he is still alive) many books of incantations and charms such as those mentioned above, listened sympathetically to their pleading, and consented to visit the sufferer, but he told them that they must first bring him a small piece of one of the garments belonging to the madman. They went home and

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

I have pointed out on pp. 38 f. that it is to her brother that a woman has recourse when trouble arises between her and her husband. This is evidently a deeply rooted custom, for in the *Complaints of the Peasant*, a literary work of the Herakleopolitan Period (*c.* 2445–2160 B.C.), the peasant flatteringly describes the High Steward Rensi, to whom all his nine petitions are addressed, as "the brother of her that is put away."[1] Unfaithfulness in a wife was evidently punished with death in ancient[2] as it is in modern Egypt. Within the last year or two a case came to my knowledge of an unchaste girl being burned to death by her father and other male relatives, an act that may be compared with the burning of the faithless wife of the chief lector Ubaoner in one of the stories in *King Kheops and the Magicians*.[3]

The love of son for mother, of which I have spoken on p. 45, was evidently as strong in ancient Egyptian families as it is to-day. The following injunction of the sage Anii to his son in respect of his mother bears a striking resemblance to what my friend (p. 45) said to me about his own mother:

> Double the bread that thou givest to thy mother, and carry her as she carried [thee]. She had a heavy load in thee, and never left it to me. When thou wast born after thy months, she carried thee yet again about her neck, and for three years her breast was in thy mouth. She was not disgusted at thy dung, she was not disgusted, and said not: "What do I?" She put thee to school, when thou hadst been taught to write, and daily she stood there . . . with bread and beer from her house. When thou art a young man and takest to thee a wife and art settled in thine house, keep before thee how thy mother gave birth to thee, and how she brought thee up further in all manner of ways. May she not do thee harm nor lift up her hands to God, and may he not hear her cry.[4]

The modern Egyptian women closely resemble their ancestors in their love of personal adornment, though, to be sure, the jewellery of to-day, particularly the earrings and bracelets, are less massive than they were, at least in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties. The bead collars worn by many of the modern peasant women are very much like those that the women are depicted as wearing in paintings and reliefs of all periods.

Tattooing (pp. 50 ff.) may have been practised in the predynastic age.[5] But that this method of personal adornment was

[1] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 119.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 38, 161 and note 3.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 38.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 239; see also A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples*, pp. 25 f.
[5] J. Capart, *Primitive Art in Egypt* (London, 1905), pp. 23, 30.

of Egypt in 1937 there were 7,947,193 men to 7,957,332 women. As nearly everyone marries, the inference is obvious. It may be, too, that Moslem customs have been counteracted to some extent by natural law and by Christian influence as represented in the Coptic family. In any case, years of work and suffering together, children, and a wife's good care create an almost unbreakable bond.

The temperament of the fellaheen, especially of the women, is very ardent and sensual. Marriage is to them less an affair of love than one of sexual attraction and reproduction.

The fellah's wife usually enjoys better health than her husband, who is weakened by bilharzia. She is younger, and despite Islam has had considerable freedom in her own affairs since the most ancient times. Village tradition requires on pain of death that she should be physically a virgin when she marries, but mentally she has ceased to be so long before. Since childhood she has been aware of her parents' intercourse, which is quite open owing to lack either of privacy or of modesty. The conversation of the women, even before young girls, turns often on these subjects, not perhaps viciously, but certainly without restraint. They tell each other of the charms and stratagems with which to please and hold their menfolk.

The men, who are more reserved and by their way of life utterly materialistic, understand only sexual love. They revel in it, each with his own wife, and are kept faithful less by virtue than by village law. Adultery leads immediately to bloodshed, and prostitutes are beyond their means.

The heat of passion is short-lived. At thirty a fellah woman is no longer attractive, but the children she has borne her husband bind him to her. Both want children above everything else. To the wife they mean social prestige, for barrenness is a disgrace and the chief cause of polygamy and divorce (**). To the father they represent helpers and successors, who will allow him to rest and give orders. Accordingly families are large. The average number of children is five, and this presupposes eight to ten births. The older they grow the more important does the mother become.

Another thing that binds the man to his wife is her wisdom and authority, which are often greater than his. A fellah proverb has it that 'Man is a river, woman a dyke'.

594 From a fortnight after marriage until her first son is five
462 years old, the wife helps her husband in the fields, especially in the cotton season; but, unlike the Alawite peasant women for example, she never tackles heavy work.

462 More often she is busy at home; there is plenty to do,
562 for she mills and bakes, rears and milks the *gamoossa* and the
593 goat, looks after the fowls, prepares manure and fuel, sews, washes, and delouses herself in public.

She is free to come and go within the limits set by village tradition. She is not hidden from the menfolk like townswomen or the women of the middle class. She has to carry breakfast to her husband out in the fields, then return home with the *gamoossa's* dung, and fetch water several times a day. She must go to market to sell eggs, butter and poultry, and to buy oil and other things. Tradition and necessity outweigh the severity of the Koran.

The wife retains ownership of the furniture she brought on her wedding-day, and the money for what she sells. In this way she can save and even lend to her husband, which gives her a certain authority. If he maltreats her, she can go back to her father's house and impose her own conditions before returning — the gift of a dress, or a pair of ear-rings. She is less dependent on her husband than he is on her.

593 A year or two ago, when the men were being levied to
181 meet the flood danger, I heard a woman weeping. "Don't
731 take it so much to heart", I said. "They've taken your
231 husband off, but he'll come back."

"It isn't for my husband I'm crying, but for my lost *gamoossa*. Find me my *gamoossa*."

562 The *fellâha* retains her liberty and authority as long as
577 she is wise enough not to infringe the traditions; for then the man gets the upper hand again. She will die rather than let herself be examined or treated by a doctor. She may go out and gossip with the other women as much as she likes, but woe to her if she is found in the company of a man, or even alone in some unwonted place. If she goes wrong, her husband accuses her to her family. Then her
684 father, brother, or cousin must kill her. Such *crimes d'hon-*
577 *neur*, being commended though not established by Islam, are still frequent and are treated with indulgence by the courts. But the severity of the punishment is out of proportion not only to the crime, but also to the woman's education.

The following is one of a hundred examples. 684
Mahmoud Ahmed 'Abdallah was leaving his village 577
near Nag' Hammadi, one day in March 1937, to go as usual to the fields, when he learnt that his sister, a widow of thirty-five, had been seduced. Hearing this he returned at once to the village and went to his sister's house. Without uttering a word he seized the *fass* he had with him and split open the poor woman's skull. When the crime became known, the Maamûr of the Markaz, the District Judge, and the Inspector of Public Health went together to the spot. The man himself gave the police the weapon he had used to murder his sister, and after confessing his crime, declared that he had wanted to avenge the family honour.

The wife may be the real ruler of the household, but woe 593
to any woman who shows a lack of respect for her husband 562
by walking in front of him on the way to market, or by interrupting him in any way while he is talking or playing with his friends. He never calls her by her own name, but addresses her as: *Ya mara* (Woman!), *Ya bint* (Girl!), [601]
or *Ya Umm Ahmad* (Mother of Ahmad! — his son). He shows his supremacy here by treating her scornfully and giving no sign of affection. The older he gets, the more he demands and values this respect.

"My wife has borne me ten children", said a fellah. "Ten children; and not one of them squints or is blind. With them beside me I feel myself honoured and respected. Thanks to their mother, their feet have never wandered along the paths of shame. She wipes their noses and cleans their faces. She teaches them to kiss my hand when I come back from the fields, to rise when I come in, to serve me first, and never to smoke when I am there."

The peasant wife, who may bear children at any time 844
between the ages of fourteen and forty-five, gives birth in the simplest fashion in the world, sitting, like the women of Pharaonic times. Mishaps are rare.

But the birth is preceded and followed by a thousand 843
practices intended to bring the child fullness of health and happiness. The magic rites are far more important than hygienic precautions. The mother is firmly persuaded that whatever she looks at attentively or wishes for ardently while she is with child will have an effect on the baby. So she

871 His methods are by no means arduous. Two or three
794 hours a day, six months a year, and in three years the fellah children, helped by the stick, will know a good many *suras* by heart. For his pains the *fiqih* or teacher receives two loaves of bread, or one piastre, a week for each pupil.

872 Nowadays even the girls must go to school, but their
562 turn comes in the afternoon. In the morning they help their mothers and fetch in the water, trying their best to
[482] balance on their heads the little *ballas* which is given them.
857 When they grow up they will be able to carry seven gallons of water in this way. They are also made to gather dung, bird-droppings, and any other refuse which may be useful in the house or the field. They make fuel cakes (*gilla*) by
[372] taking a little mud, some chopped straw and a quantity of dung, which they knead into a paste with their hands and feet, and then take lumps of, to flatten into cakes about eight inches across. These are spread out on the ground to dry in the sun, or stuck on the wall. When thoroughly dry they are piled up on the roof. These dung-cakes are the fellah's coal; they are an essentially agricultural form of fuel, used wherever wood and money are lacking, for example in China and in several parts of France.

524 The girls have rag dolls to play with, but more often,
857 up to the age of about twelve, they join with the boys in both work and play. Occasionally, from the age of eight
[464] until they get married, they go into service in middle-class homes.

857 These children are ignorant and to all appearance neg-
593 lected. They live in a herd and seem to have no patronymics. But it would be wrong to infer from this that they are of no concern to their parents, and belong to the community at large. On the contrary their parents love them passionately, far more than they love each other. Children are never put
[736] up for sale here as they are in China, and there is no need for orphanages. Parental sensitiveness is a frequent cause of quarrels among both men and women. If a teacher hits or
861 ill-treats their child they are up in arms immediately to
871 remove him from school and take a brutal vengeance. This does not, however, stop them from using blows and insults to 'educate' their children themselves.

593 The children are also very much attached to both their parents. This attachment seems to be rooted in their

social and religious traditions, and in fear and natural respect rather than in any deep affection. 593

Yet the love of the son for his mother, even when he is grown up and married, is the most noticeable attachment in the fellah family. If he has been lacking in respect for her, the whole village is shocked. 'Paradise lies under your mother's feet.' She is mistress of his household, till her dying day. She is even named after her son, as *Umm 'Aly*, the Mother of 'Aly. 593 577

This relationship is the most solid bond in the family, the more so as ancestry counts for little. The peasant family has no forefathers, no family name, no individuality and no independence. In this it is very different from the Chinese family, to which ancestor-worship and the honour of the family name are very important. 593

Here the family group shades off into a wider community more or less closely interrelated by blood and marriage, the family in the social sense. Under the authority of its head this enlarged family attends funerals and weddings, carries on feuds, and is ready to avenge the honour of any one of its members. This solidarity is only of the present, for after three generations it is no longer recognisable. So, just as the house is not a complete unit by itself, neither is the family which lives in it. As there is no real 'home', because there is no home life, so there is no real 'family', because there is no family life. 593 602

The family is a group for working the soil, into which children are born as additional helpers. Its union with the soil is made doubly sure by a tangle of traditions regulating life in the home. 593

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

38.

×539
466

El-ʿafu, ya bē, yāsendina,
win kunna ʿibna terabbīna;
win kunna uladak teraddīna!
Ya dōb es-sams tewaddīna.

I beg your pardon, O Bey, our master!
If we have done something badly, then reprove us;
And if we have been thy sons, then content us!
The sun will scarcely guide us (home).

[554] [576] 1. By using very high titles in addressing their masters the peasants often curry favor. Many of our people addressed us as "Bey" and it often happened that some poor devil, asking in fear and trembling for something, would proceed in one breath to the superlative thus: "ya bē, ya bāša, ya brinz": "bey, pasha, prince".

[593] 2. That is to say: "thy good sons". For the Egyptian, the adjective is superfluous, as sons usually behave very respectfully toward their father. Even sons who are but fairly well brought up, will not, in the presence of their father, either be seated, eat or smoke, without special command to do so.

2. 3. Another said: rabbīna, raddīna.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

127.

Disobedient.

539x 521 593

A young wife, against the express command of her husband — very pretty women are kept at home — has gone again at daybreak, to the river, to chat with her former companions, who have come to draw water (see No. 78). Meanwhile sunrise draws nearer and she urges the return home, in order that her husband may not discover her absence.

Ya banāt imlu u-šīlu,
la-n-nahār yiṭla' 'alēye.
Ḫēfe min maḥbūbi yilā'ini,
Sīdi u-mḥarrag 'alēye.

O girls, fill and carry away,
That the day may not surprise me.
I fear, that my beloved may meet me.
He is my master and has forbidden me.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

129.

A Matrimonial Tiff.

539x
593

The husband has brought some meat for his wife, but has been much delayed. As an excuse, he tells her of the crowd at the railway station. "Say what you please. I have now neither time nor mind to cook", is the answer which he receives.

Gāb-li-l-laḥme
wel-wabūr zaḥme.
Yabn-el-'aḥbe
maṭbuḫšē ana.

He brought me the meat
And at the railway station there was a great crowd.
Thou son of a harlot,
I will not cook!

a. We have a like friendly address in No. 131.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

130.

Remorse.

x 539
832
152

Yāna, yāna min ṛarāmo, yāne!
Ṣabaḥet ʿēnēye mis-sahar dablāne.
Ṣanatēn wana taḥtē ḍill ḥirāmo.
Ḥāṣimt ummi wabūye ʿala šāno.
Ya mīn yeṣallaḥni dana-l-ṛaḍbāne.

Oh, in what a state, what a state am I, because of my burning love for him!
In the morning my eyes are dull for lack of sleep.
For two years I have been under the shadow of his blanket.
I fell out with my mother and my father for his sake.
Oh, who will comfort me? I am so vexed!

1. What consequences my love has entailed!

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

131.

A Friendly Reception.

539x 166 464

At a time when profits were low, a Nile sailor left his ship and went, perhaps to Suez, in search of other work. He then knocked about in the Delta, and after a long absence, returned home, at last, to his wife and children, who, in the meantime had suffered need. The wife receives him with this cutting reproof, the sense of which is: Did I not tell you what the result would be? But what do you care about your family! (ll. 3—8). [593]

We often heard from our workmen, that, in order to secure work, they wander, for instance, from Quft in Upper Egypt, to Suez. This song was usually attached to No. 88 with which it has nothing to do. The connection is probably suggested only because of the picture of the ship used in No. 88.

593 539x 464

Ya ma ʾultᵉ̊-lak, ya ma ʾultᵉ̊-lak
winte lissa fi-ʾangetak?:
Ya yehūdi, yabn-el-yehudīye,
hissak terūḥ eš-šarʾīye,
yaḥdūk bilād el-ġarbīye,
tiṣbaḥ ʿadīm. id-dirrīye.
Dannak ʿala-l-muʾdāf rāiḥ
teṭallaʿ er-raml es-sāiḥ.

Did I not tell thee so, did I not tell thee so?
When thou wast yet on thy ship?
"Thou Jew and son of the Jewess, [186]
Beware of going to the Sharʾīye,

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

×539 5 They will carry thee to the villages of the Ṛarbīye,
● 593 And some fine day thou wilt be without thy children.
464 So stay by thy rowing,
Whilst thou stirrest up the flowing sand."

2. 'ange is a large sail-boat, almost exactly resembling the [501] better known dahabîye, excepting that it is smaller. Compare Wilkinson, Modern Egypt I p. 209 ff. (cut ibid. p. 195).

3. Compare note on No. 96, l. 5.

4. 5. eš-šar'îye, namely: the east and el-ṛarbîye: the west, [103] are two provinces of the Delta, of which the capitals are Zaqāzîq (Za'āzî') and Ṭanṭa.

8. In pushing off, the oars stir up the sand. This is Maḥmûd's explanation, but I have a suspicion that this line has [114] been corrupted. Perhaps a picture has slipped in from the excavations, where the fine, running sand often makes the work a task of the Danaïds.

132.

An Evidence of Favor.

×539 A certain working-girl boasts to her companions. The
832 inspector has not given the pretty girl a pomegranate without
[824] a purpose. The pomegranate is a sign for love.

El-ḫōli iddāni rummāne
we-ṛamaṣni be-'ēno en-na'sāne.

The inspector has given me a pomegranate
And has winked at me with his sleepy eye.

[624] 1. Ḫōli is the inspector of an estate of some size.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

133.

A Young Wife and an Old Husband.

539x
593

Tiddāni liš-šaīb lē?
Ya-ḥsāret šabābi fī!
Eš-šaīb yešabšabni
we-ʿaṣato telehlebni.
Saʿat ma-nḫušš el-ʾāʿa,
yibʾa-l-ṛamm meḥauwiṭni.

Why do you give me to the gray-head?
It is a pity to waste my youth on him!
The old man will make me ill,
And his cane will torment me.
When we enter the hall,
Grief will constantly surround me!

2. One must think of superstitious usages which are supposed to incline the young wife's love toward the old man. (Vollers.)

3. The principal room of the house. See No. 98, note on l. 2. [342]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

tion is made of her it is usually accompanied, as in the case of other unclean things, with a "saving your presence" (*essuk Allah*, literally "God honour you"); with regard to inheritance she is regarded as only a half person; she is generally excluded from the mosque, and as a rule is not required to pray, or to know more than is necessary for housekeeping. Still, in the lands of Islam, as well as in the rest of the world, the weaker sex has subjected the stronger in certain fields. Here, too, there are plenty of men who are under petticoat government. The wife is significantly called *sitt*, that is, "mistress," and even the husband calls her so. The wife has even duties to perform towards the outer world in so far as she has to manage the housekeeping. When, in the absence of her husband a guest has to be entertained, meals are served up in the name of the wife through her servants or children, she inquires after the name and health of the guest, but she herself does not appear.

Her sphere of activity is entirely limited to the house, and she fulfils her mission with all the more contentment that the pleasures of the great world are unknown to her. She is not unsusceptible to the attractions of dress and finery—her sex makes this a matter of course—but she has only her husband and her female friends to shine before, and that sets a natural limit to her desires. Her longings do not go beyond her state of half freedom, to which she is accustomed from her youth up, seclusion is not regarded by her as a restraint imposed by the tyrannical men, but as a precept of morality, and a sudden edict of emancipation would at once arouse in the harem itself as much indignation and resistance as a tightening of the reins among the ladies of civilization. It is not to be denied that only in the garden of freedom can a healthy plant thrive, and come to maturity and produce fruit a thousand fold. The greenhouse plant never feels the storm, but it remains weakly and droops at the slightest breath of unaccustomed air that gains entrance from the outside by some crevice. Yet experience teaches that a goodly number of those open-air garden plants cannot stand their freedom, and perish if they do not receive strict attention and care.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

595 [831] is never felt by the Oriental; he condemns it, and knows only the natural sensual love, and the noblest and most practical, the love of a husband, often very true and deep. Among the ancient Egyptians monogamy alone seems to have been practised; on the other hand marriages between brothers and sisters were allowed.

● 593 To the modern Egyptians, the monogamous Copts, as well as the polygamous Mohammedans, kind-hearted and full of feeling as they are, lively family affections are not to be denied. The members of a family usually cling tenderly to each other; to them a foreign country is equivalent to misery, and a lengthy separation a misfortune. Veneration is deeply, to us as it often seems almost tyrannically, impressed upon children. In the presence of a father it would be disrespectful to smoke, to sit, and to speak more than is necessary. If [594] [264] there are guests the son does not eat with them but serves, it is only by the special desire of a guest that he joins the party. The younger brother has to behave in a similar manner towards his elder. Where circumstances permit, and 596 888 especially therefore in the country, all the members of the family up to old age inhabit a common dwelling, living in patriarchal style. The old father or mother, no longer able to work, lives with the vigorous son, and free from care awaits the end; and additional children, instead of being [842] looked on as a burden, are welcomed by parents as a blessing from Heaven, which thus bestows on them so many additional 165 supporters. Living the simple and temperate life they do, great ages are common; according to the statements of the people 90 to 100 years are no rarity, but these reports are not to be depended on, since scarcely anybody knows the day or even the year of his birth. Early marriages being the rule, [587] generations follow each other so rapidly that it is not rare for the great-great-grandfather to see his great-great-grandson.

593 The idyllic patriarchal life of union is on the whole the rule, but there are also many exceptions. Here as elsewhere there are cruel mothers, shrews, ungrateful children, brothers at deadly enmity, scolding mothers-in-law, husbands that beat their wives, wives that beat their husbands.